

Common Misconceptions about Chiropractic Care.

There are a number of different myths about chiropractic care, and many of them prevent people seeing a chiropractor and having their problems addressed. Below is a list of some common misconceptions and fears that people have about the profession:

Adjustments can hurt.

There are many techniques available to adjust the spine - ranging from the classic dynamic thrust to very light forces or contacts, and can include table or instrument assisted delivery. Modern chiropractors utilize safe and effective procedures suitable to the patient's age, condition and comfort levels.

Most often a spinal adjustment itself will not hurt at all. In fact a great sense of relief will be experienced. On some occasions it may feel like someone is momentarily pressing on a bruise. As your body adapts to your adjustments, you may experience some additional discomfort, similar to the sensation of tender muscles after starting an exercise program. Over time, as your nervous system integrates the effects of the adjustments, most people feel a continuing sense of ease. This is one reason many people make chiropractic the cornerstone of their wellness lifestyle.

You only have to see a chiropractor when you are in pain.

Many people believe it is only necessary to consult a chiropractor when they are experiencing pain or discomfort. This is not true. Chiropractors also take preventative measures to ensure that problems do not occur in the future. Some people see a chiropractor simply for a check-up, to make sure joints and muscles are functioning properly.

Adjustments are dangerous and can cause stroke.

Chiropractic is recognized as one of the safest types of health care in the world. Numerous studies, including those funded by governments, universities and nonprofit research institutions, have proven it to be a successful primary therapy for neuromusculoskeletal conditions -- a therapy that is safer, in fact, than most medical procedures used to treat the same conditions. The source of public concern in this regard is a condition known as vertebral artery syndrome (VAS), which occurs when sudden head movements disrupt the blood flow in the vertebral artery, possibly leading to stroke. According to the 1996 RAND report, "The Appropriateness of Manipulation and Mobilization of the Cervical Spine," only one out of every one million chiropractic patients experiences VAS. Even if this is still a concern for you, there are many different techniques to adjust the spine which are very low-force and are extremely safe.

Fear of the "pop".

Usually people fear the "pop" sound because they do not know what it is. The pop sound occurs when a joint has been forced past its normal physiological range of motion. When this happens, there is a release of nitrous oxide gas, which causes the "popping" sound. It normally takes about

15-20 minutes for the gas to get back inside the joint, so a second popping sound will not be achievable until that time has passed.

I can crack my back on my own.

By trying to crack your own back, you may be causing more problems. First of all, it is difficult to achieve. But more importantly, major part of making adjustments is proper positioning, which is hard to achieve on your own. When you attempt to make an adjustment on your own, any joint that is capable of moving could achieve the “pop” sound associated with a successful adjustment. However, this does not mean you have returned movement to the proper joint. Along with the release of nitrous oxide comes the release of endorphins. Endorphins will give you a brief sense of euphoria, making you believe you have cured your problem. Unfortunately, the pain will likely return approximately 25 minutes later. If you continue to adjust yourself every 20 minutes for relief, then the joints will become hyper mobile and therefore more difficult to maintain stability!

Once I start seeing a chiropractor, I will have to continue seeing one for the rest of my life.

It is not necessary to continue seeing a chiropractor once they have taken care of your problems. Though you are not obligated to continue treatment, many chiropractors will recommend periodic visits in order to maintain optimal health. Usually people will have check-ups from every 1-3 months or even weekly depending your lifestyle, the condition of your body and any prevailing conditions.

This article was written by Dr. Jacqueline Bouley, owner of LiveWell Chiropractic located in Needham. She is a member of the Eat Well Be Fit Needham Committee, a group dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Needham residents. This town-wide committee is composed of concerned professionals consisting of the Needham Health Department, Needham Public Schools, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital Needham, Nutritionists, Physicians, Needham Park and Recreation Commission, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and local residents and businesses. For more information about this committee, or to see past articles, contact the Needham Health Department at 781-455-7500 or visit the web site at <http://www.needhamma.gov/EWBF>.